

from large samples of birds, and their pathological examination at the Mauritius Animal Health Laboratory could help to identify possible public and animal health risks, helping to refine and improve control tactics in the future in Mauritius and elsewhere.

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## Notes on some Hawaiian birds from Cook's third voyage

by Storrs L. Olson

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Scientific knowledge of the birds of the Hawaiian Islands began with the discovery of the archipelago in 1778 on the third and last voyage of Captain James Cook. Contemporary accounts of the Hawaiian avifauna and the history of the specimens brought back from the islands on that voyage have been compiled in an exhaustive monograph by Medway (1981). These accounts and the specimens are of interest not only historically but also from the standpoint of systematics and nomenclature, because most of them are the basis for the descriptions of new species. Further research into the history of Hawaiian ornithology has enabled me to amplify or modify a few points discussed by Medway.

**The probable identity of Latham's "Sandwich Thrush", *Turdus sandwichensis* Gmelin, 1789**

Most of the Hawaiian birds from Cook's third voyage were first described by Latham (1781–1785), who did not at that time, however, use Latin names for them, these being supplied subsequently by Gmelin (1788–1793). Among these was one species whose identity has remained uncertain to this day, the specimen upon which it was based having apparently been lost at an early date (Medway 1981: 167). This was Latham's "Sandwich Thrush", later Latinized as *Turdus sandwichensis* by Gmelin (1789:813). Latham's (1783:39) description is the sole remaining evidence of the identity of this species:

"Length five inches and a half. Bill dusky: the upper parts of the plumage pale brown: forehead and under parts cinereous white: belly and lower part of the thighs pale brown: tail even at the end: legs dusky.

Inhabits *Sandwich Islands*. In the collection of Sir *Joseph Banks*."

Medway (1981:167) has reviewed the opinions of various authors who speculated inconclusively on the identity of this bird. The small size and white forehead were cited as precluding the Hawaiian thrushes of the genus *Phaeornis* (= *Myadestes*). The only other suggestion to be advanced was the Kauai creeper, *Oreomystis bairdi* (Stejneger). This species would be improbable considering the limited opportunities Cook's expedition had for obtaining birds from Kauai, except from native traders, who would not likely have dealt in such a drab commodity. There is no evidence that any specimens of birds other than *Vestiaria coccinea* were ever obtained from Kauai by Cook's voyage.

Instead, it seems to me that Latham's description very likely applies to the immature plumage of the Elepaio *Chasiempis sandwichensis* (Gmelin, 1789), from the island of Hawaii. The length, "five inches and a half", is exactly the same as that which Latham (1783:344) gave for his "Sandwich Flycatcher", the description of which formed the basis for Gmelin's (1789:945) *Muscicapa sandwichensis*. In the plumage usually regarded as juvenile in *Chasiempis s. sandwichensis* (plumages of Pacific flycatchers are complex and their proper terminology requires further study), the upperparts are indeed light brown, and the underparts and usually the forehead are dingy whitish. Although the belly proper is the same colour as the rest of the underparts, the flanks are brown. Thus, there is nothing in Latham's description that really conflicts with the juvenile plumage of *Chasiempis s. sandwichensis*. The Elepaio was doubtless an abundant bird on the Kona coast during Cook's visit and it is not at all unlikely that specimens in various plumages would have been obtained. Such variation was responsible for Latham's (1783:345) description of the "Spotted-winged Flycatcher", the *Muscicapa maculata* of Gmelin (1789:945), which has long been regarded as a synonym of *Chasiempis sandwichensis*.

The correspondence between the description of Latham's "Sandwich Thrush" and the immature plumage of the Elepaio is so close that I think it is safe to assume they are the same. Therefore, because the names involved were proposed simultaneously, as first reviser I consider *Turdus sandwichensis* Gmelin (1789:813) to be a subjective synonym of *Muscicapa*

*sandwichensis* Gmelin (1789:945). This maintains the existing type and citation for the species, which in this case is preferable to page precedence (*International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*, 1985: Article 24b, Recommendation 24A), even though the nomenclature would not change, because the 2 epithets are homonyms.

### **The type-locality of the Iiwi *Vestiaria coccinea* (Forster, 1781)**

The Iiwi, a species known historically from all the larger Hawaiian Islands, was the first bird to be formally described from the archipelago, being called *Certhia coccinea* by Forster (1781). It was also almost certainly the first species of Hawaiian bird to come into the hands of Cook's naturalists, as specimens clearly of this species were bought from natives when the voyage made its first stop in the islands at Waimea, Kauai, in January 1778 (Medway 1981:106). Otherwise, virtually all natural history collecting by Cook's expedition in the Hawaiian Islands took place on the Kona coast of the island of Hawaii.

After reviewing the evidence, Medway (1981:112) concluded that: "with the exception of *Vestiaria coccinea*, first obtained from the Waimea district of Kauai, the Kona district of Hawaii can be accepted as the type locality for those Hawaiian bird species which were first validly described from specimens collected on the third Cook voyage." Stresemann (1950: 790), too, suggested that the specimens of *V. coccinea* examined by Forster may have been purchased on Kauai. Greenway (1968:95) cited Stresemann in listing the type-locality as "probably Kauai". Previously, Bangs (1911:30), on the other hand, had suggested that: "The island whence the type of *V. coccinea*, brought back by Captain Cook, really came can probably never be known; it seems safe, however, to assume that it was Hawaii, as Captain Cook stopped longer there than at any of the other islands." These authors all overlooked an important point, however, namely that Forster (1781), in the original description, specifically and repeatedly stated that the species came from the island of "O-Waihi" (= Hawaii). This is evident even in the title of his paper: "Beschreibung des Rothen Baumläufers von der Insel O-Waihi," and is reiterated in the first sentence: "In my hands at this very moment I have a sample of a red treecreeper (*Certhia coccinea*), which is said to be rather numerous on the newly discovered island of O-Waihi". This is followed in due course by the statement that: "The habitat of this little creature is the island of Waihi. . ." (translations from Medway 1981:135, 136).

It is immaterial where the *first* specimens were obtained insofar as the designation of a type-locality is concerned. The only possible justification for altering Forster's clear designation of Hawaii would be if it could be conclusively proved that all 4 of the specimens available to Forster certainly came from Kauai, or that the expedition obtained *no* specimens of *Vestiaria coccinea* on Hawaii. The former can hardly be demonstrated because apparently none of Forster's specimens still exist (Medway 1981), and none were ever likely to have had specific locality data associated with them. That no specimens of *Vestiaria coccinea* were obtained on Hawaii is extremely unlikely considering that much more collecting was conducted on that island than on Kauai and that "more specimens of *Vestiaria*

*coccinea* were taken back to England than of any other third-voyage Hawaiian bird species" (Medway 1981:137).

Forster obtained the 4 specimens he used in his original description from a German, Barthold Lohmann, who had been on the voyage, and all of his information concerning Cook's third voyage came from interviews with Lohmann and another German sailor, Heinrich Zimmerman (Medway 1981:134). In a letter to Joseph Banks dated 10 January 1781, Forster again clearly states that he was given "some skins of a red Creeper from O-why-hee" (Scheibe 1978:318). At the time, the Hawaiian archipelago was referred to as the Sandwich Islands, and Kauai usually went by the name Atooi, so there would have been no reason for Forster to give the provenance of his specimens as O-Waihi or O-why-hee had he not intended to refer to the island of Hawaii.

For the above reasons, the type-locality of *Certhia coccinea* should be considered to be the Kona district of Hawaii, the same as all other species described from the Hawaiian Islands on the basis of third-voyage specimens.

### The 'lost' co-type of *Drepanis pacifica*

Medway (1981:142) reviewed the evidences showing that the 2 specimens of Mamo *Drepanis pacifica*, formerly in the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna, were co-types of *Certhia pacifica* Gmelin, 1788, and originated in Cook's voyage. Sassi (1940:408) reported that only one of these remained in Vienna at the time of his writing, the other, an imperfect specimen lacking the upper bill, having been sold to the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). I examined the catalogue at Vienna and found that this specimen was sold in 1923 for \$103. Medway (1981:142) stated that "a recent (1977) enquiry of that museum [AMNH] does not disclose that it ever possessed this specimen. I do not know what became of it."

This specimen has, in fact, long been in the collections of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (MCZ 236875). Bangs (1930:363) wrote of it as follows: "Our specimen is one of the two cotypes that were for years in the Vienna Museum. It was secured from that institution by Doctor Leonard C. Sanford, and came to us in exchange from him for one of our pair of *Ciridops*—the unique female." I examined the specimen at Harvard in 1985. It still bears the characteristic oval parchment label of the early Vienna collections and on the reverse has AMNH catalogue number 23044.

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## Distributional notes on the birds of Burkina Faso

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The birds of Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) have remained poorly known in comparison with those of most other countries of west Africa. This paucity of records is immediately apparent from the atlases of speciation in African birds (Hall & Moreau 1970, Snow 1978). A few recent papers have included further records from the country (e.g. Green & Sayer 1979, Payne 1982, Thonnerieux 1984, 1985, 1988, Thonnerieux in press); but there has been no comprehensive survey, so that it is difficult to obtain even an up to date species list from the literature.

The country is mainly in the savanna woodland zone, the far north having rather dry scrub dominated by *Acacia*, whereas moister woodland prevails in the south, especially the far southwest. There are no striking topographical features in Burkina Faso and the vegetation zones that are represented all extend far beyond the country; it is thus not surprising that the avifauna completely lacks endemics and indeed has few localised rarities. There is, however, quite a large avifauna in total, including many Palearctic migrants.

We visited Burkina Faso both during the rainy season (September 1988) and during the dry season (November 1988). Our observations are reported in detail here because of the scarcity of distributional data from the country. A considerable number of the species we recorded do not appear to have been reported previously. We hope that presentation of our notes will encourage others to record observations there so that a more comprehensive understanding of the avifauna can be achieved.